

MONA BREWERY, LLANFACHRAETH, ANGLESEY: FURTHER INFORMATION

GORDON STONE

Following George Crutcher's timely update on the Mona Brewery (*Brewery History*, Number 161, Spring 2015), the author has uncovered additional information not included in his original article published in *Brewery History*, Number 142, Summer 2011. These include photographs, a plan, details of change of ownership and bankruptcy, plus information concerning individuals who worked at the brewery. These items add to the earlier article and attempt to give some chronological order to the circumstances which led to the end of the brewery.

The plan of the brewery (Fig. 1) shows the *Bridge* at the side of the brewery over the tributary of the Alaw, known as Alaw Bach. It was of an arched pack-horse style and was opened by Lady Reade in 1896. The initials M E E C R, inscribed on the present bridge (Fig. 2), are those of the estate owner Maria Emma Elizabeth Conway Reade (1840 - 1917). An earlier crossing consisted of stone/slate slabs, these were removed to prevent access to Bodlason in a right of way dispute by the owner of a nearby corn mill/windmill.

The *Brewery House* was originally known as Bryn Afon (hill river), the earliest mention being in 1812 (unconfirmed).

The site had the advantage of being situated close to transport links by sea, land and rail. The outline of what may have been a raised path is visible from the lane and could have been a route to the mouth of the Alaw where ships were built and repaired. Telford's road to Holyhead passed close by and a further connection came when the Valley railway station was opened in 1849, being joined to the mainland by the Britannia Bridge in 1850.

The *Maltings* - The M & BR No.3 loading door (Fig. 3) was part of the maltings on an upper level. I was unable to enter but was informed by the owner that it contained a deep pit, enough for a person to stand up in. There were in the maltings 'fancy bricks with holes in for drying the hops'.

The plan of the 1918 sale of the estate showed three malt houses as part of the former brewery. Perhaps M & BR No.3 referred to malting and brewing room number three, if the lettering is original. After the sale of the brewery in 1900, the 1901 proposed alterations plan showed the maltings to be converted into a cow house as part of the change of use to a farm.

Mona Stores - From the lane, opposite the M & BR No. 3 loading door, was an office which may have been also used for out-sales. The inscribed windows (Figs. 4, 5, 6 & 7) were placed here. These may have been from the premises in the village run by David Williams. After the Stores closed there in 1872, the business was then run from the brewery by William Owen Jones (son).

The *Brewing Block* - The ground floor was reported to contain brick remains forming a curved outline to take the vats (unverified).

The *Water Wheel* - Water was diverted from Alaw Bach to power the water wheel which ran along the perimeter of the brewing block and part of the maltings. Nothing is known of the iron water-wheel or if it replaced an earlier wooden one.

Many iron water wheels were installed in the first half of the nineteenth century and it was not until the

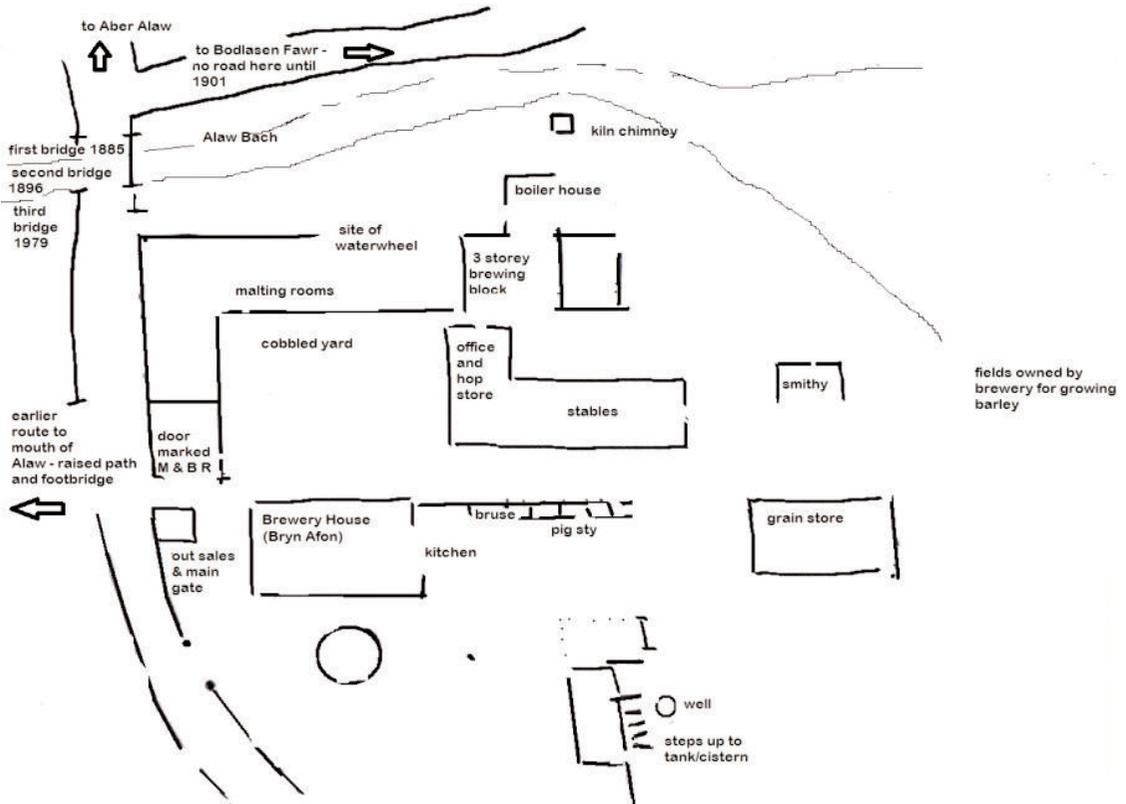


Figure 1. Plan drawn up after site visit and conversations with the owner, 2008.

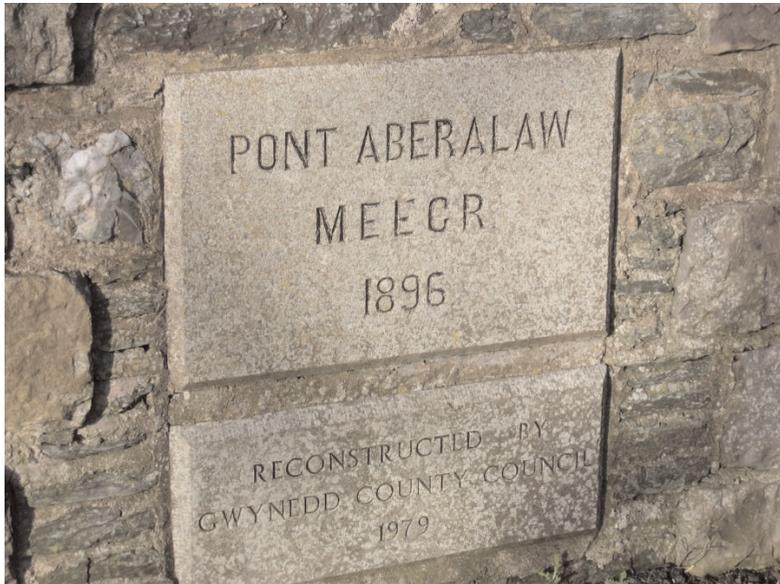


Figure 2. Inscriptions on the present bridge.



Figure 3. The loading door.



Figure 4. Mona stores window.



Figure 5. Mona stores window.



Figure 6. Mona stores window.



Figure 7. Mona Stores window.



Figure 8. Site of the water wheel looking from the brewery block towards the maltings and the lane. To the right and below of the two windows is a large pit which would have taken the wheel alongside the mill pond.

1840s that steam engines were being built to exceed the horse power of the largest water-wheels.

Given favourable working circumstances It may have made economic sense for the water wheel to be used alongside the steam engine as both are mentioned in the sale of the brewery in 1882.

The prospectus issued in the same year identifies and indicates the steam engine and the boiler as nearly equal to new; indicating a more recent introduction - perhaps after the death of John Jones (1870)?

The growth of the brewery - background

John Jones, the owner and brewer until his death in December 1870, was the son of Owen Jones of the nearby Llanfechell Brewery. Owen Jones married Francis Brereton of the Brereton brewing family. Ann, the sister of John Jones, married Henry Treweek who was originally a mine agent and later became a ship owner in Amlwch.

A period of expansion took place during the period 1850-1870, shown in the numbers employed; these numbers rose steadily over the period, listed below. John Jones was also farming 45 acres (not 65 as previously recorded). In addition, he became a wine and spirit merchant with the establishment of the Mona Stores in 1866.

The date of the instillation of the steam engine and the imposing chimney stack is uncertain but may have been part of his plans to expand the business.

Upon John's death in 1870, his wife Margaret Ellen and their sons ran the brewery until the end of the 1870s. The family connection continued indirectly with son-in-law David Williams becoming the owner several times through into the 1890s.

Bankruptcy

By the end of the 1870s there were indications things were not going well. The 1881 census records Hugh Jones living in Llanfachraeth. He was the Bailiff of the Mona Brewery; a former agricultural labourer, appointed to recover debts. His presence was no doubt related to

the later proceedings which took place in Bangor Bankruptcy court.

The first stage in this process was the issue of a notice for the proceedings for liquidation, instituted by Margaret Jones of the Mona Brewery in December 1881.¹

Following this a meeting of creditors took place at the end of the month revealing liabilities of £3,600 and assets of £1,400; the National Provincial Bank being a major creditor. It was decided to liquidate under a committee of inspection.²

Legal action took place in February 1882³ and concerned the surrender of family insurance policies; the sale of which was ordered by the court but subsequently was not acted upon by the family. This resulted in a further hearing in October 1882.⁴

The Bangor Bankruptcy Court of March, 1882 concerned the disputed possession of two horses, a pony, a plough, a waggonette and a bag of hops; revealing details of manoeuvring within the family, contacts within the trade and information about the brewery:^{5 & 6}

Messrs. W.Y. & E. Owen, maltsters of Ironbridge were called upon to return a dog cart which had been sent to them. John William Crosby, an ale and porter merchant of West Derby had received two ponies and harness. John Parry received one of the horses. Andrew Brereton, a brewer in Mold and a relative of Margaret Jones, appeared in person. He had received a horse and a packet of hops (valued at £10) two days before the petition for bankruptcy was filed. He said he would rather have lost all his debt than have pressed the debtor. These were all claimed to be the property of William Owen Jones (son) and had been passed on to the above individuals. The trustee of the estate of Margaret Ellen Jones of the Mona Brewery claimed they were the property of the debtor (Mrs Jones) and should be handed over to the trustee.

William Owen Jones, it was stated, had claimed against the estate for £360, being three years of salary arrears as a traveller for the brewery. Mr Jones said he had carried on an independent business to that of his mother as a wine and spirit merchant and also dealt in horses. He managed the farm for his mother and looked after the brewery. He made sometimes £50 a year by horse dealing but was not always so fortunate. He had lost money



Figure 9. Memorial to John Jones and Margaret Ellen his wife, Church of St. Machraeth, Llanfachraeth.



Figure 10. Interior of the maltings looking towards the lane, containing fittings from its former use as a cow house. The outside loading door is off to the upper left of centre.



Figure 11. Interior of the maltings looking in the direction of the chimney and the brewing block.



Figure 12. Blocked up door.

by dealing in wines and spirits and had now abandoned the trade.

Mrs Jones corroborated her son's evidence that the items belonged to him. However, the judgement was that that all the items should be returned to the trustee; costs were given against W O Jones but not against the other parties who appeared to be innocent and had offered to give up the articles when challenged.

The public auction

An order was issued by the County Court for a public auction to take place on the 28/29 March, 1882 at the Mona Brewery:⁷

First Day's Sale: Leasehold premises held for an unexpired term of 23 years from November 1882, annual ground rent of £8, comprising of commodious dwelling house, the brewery, stabling, granaries, gardens and about four acres.

Fixed plant and machinery at valuation and comprises of: Two large copper wort boilers, fermenting vats, hop strainers, coolers, mash tub, barrels, iron water wheel with shafting and pulleys, an eight-horse power steam engine and boiler, forcing pumps, conservatories.

Second Day's Sale: Three brewers' drays, five powerful carthorses, mule, two tons of hops, quantity of malt and the whole of the household furniture.

These contents suggest a brewery with a comprehensive infrastructure which spans the earlier period associated with the sole use of the water wheel to the introduction of the steam engine. The iron water-wheel is no longer on site; the deep pit of the undershot wheel is still visible but overgrown. The eight-horsepower steam engine was said to be a Prosperity engine by a local resident but it has not been possible to find any information about this type.

Purchase by David Williams

David Williams the son-in-law of the late John Jones, purchased the property at the auction for the sum of £800.^{8 & 9} He had previously been involved with John

Jones in the setting up of the Mona Stores Wine and Spirit Merchants in 1866.

The prospectus

A Prospectus was issued on 23 June 1882 for the forming of the brewery as a limited liability company.¹⁰ Although there is some duplication of information from that of the public auction, the Prospectus provides some additional detail:¹¹

The property comprises of two spacious malt houses and kilns capable of being made to produce 20 quarters of malt every four days.

The brewery is fitted with an eight-horse power steam engine and boiler, nearly equal to new.

Two large copper liquor and wort boilers, in good order, capable of brewing five quarters of malt each day and all other necessary utensils for working this.

The malting and brewing premises are very extensive and are well adapted for business purposes and with a small outlay can be made equal to the most modern premises in the Kingdom. Absolute rights are secured under the lease to the fine stream of water running through the premises, the brewing properties of which are well known.

David Williams has agreed to accept eighty fully paid up shares in consideration of his handing over to the company his purchases at the sale, at cost price; he will also pay the necessary expenses of forming and registering the company.

Brewing operations are now being carried on The property being purchased as a going concern it will not be necessary for the company to spend any capital (after paying Mr Williams). Thus, expenses generally incidental to the starting up of new companies are in this case, avoided and it is expected that the company will be able to pay a good dividend the first year.

The Prospectus concludes by stating that:

The profitable nature of the business is too well known to require comment, as evidenced by the fact that at a private preliminary meeting of the promoters ... held a short time ago, 255 shares were subscribed for, including the vendor's shares.

warded their first

"THE TRUTH AGAIN T THE WORLD."
 Cymru am Byth A Chalou Lan Mynwch o ddiod Mona Mae yn hynod ddiod dda.

Public Notice for the Public Good.
 THE MONA STORES ARE NOW OPEN
 For the Sale of Wines and Spirits.

JOHNS JONES, of the Mona Brewery, Llan-
 fachreth, near Holyhead, in thanking his numer-
 ous friends for their kind patronage and support for the
 last 30 years, begs to announce that he has taken the
 premises lately occupied by Mr. David Williams, Draper
 &c, in which he will carry on the business of a Wine and
 Spirit Merchant, under the style or firm of Jones and
 Company; and trusts that they will extend their favors
 to him in this additional part of his trade, which will be
 conducted with the same care and assiduity as that which
 has so successfully characterised the brewery branch.
 Address.—JONES & COMPANY, Wine and Spirit
 Merchants, Mona Stores, Llanfachreth, Holyhead.

Figure 13. Advert announcing commencement of Mona Stores.



Figure 14. Stoneware flagon manufactured by Price & Co. of Bristol c 1866.



Figure 15. Stoneware flagon may have been used for dispensing liquids (capacity ten pints) but more likely used as an advertising item.



Figure 16. A deep circular well provided a pumped water supply for the brewery, the gardens and domestic requirements.

Mr W O Jones, who has been managing the business for his mother, Mrs M E Jones for the last twelve years, and is well acquainted with all the customers of the brewery, will offer his services to the company on reasonable terms.

The Mona Brewery Company Limited

The company was registered on the 11 August 1882 with a capital of £5,000 in £5 shares to purchase the brewery.¹²

Subscribers were:

These subscribers were to act as directors until others were appointed, the qualification being ten shares. The company at a general meeting would determine re numeration.

At this stage, the company seems to be under subscribed as well as falling short of the 255 shares said to have been subscribed earlier by friends and others at the informal meeting organised by David Williams.

D. Williams	Farmer	Aberffraw	20 shares
Reverend G.J. Hughes	Clerk in Holy Orders	Llanerch-y-Medd	10 shares
(The above individual did not subscribe to the brewery in 1841 as stated previously)			
J.E. Roberts	Corn Merchant	Aberffraw	10 shares
O.E. Edwards	Farmer	Bethel	25 shares
R. Williams	Farmer	Llangwyllog	20 shares
W.J. Williams	Farmer	Aberffraw	10 shares
J. Jones	Farmer	Llangwylfan	10 shares
H. Williams		Llangwylfan	10 shares

Winding up of the company

The company was wound up following a series of legal hearings relating to:

Surrender of insurance policies by the Jones family (at Bangor County Court October 1882).¹³

The close of liquidation (County Court of Caernarfonshire December 1883).¹⁴

A further hearing relating to liquidation (High Court of Justice Chancery Division April 1884).¹⁵

The language of the reporting of legal proceedings of the time does not always aid clarification. The past financial affairs of Margaret Jones (1820-1882) and her family would be, no doubt, closely linked with the functioning of the brewery under the first ownership of David Williams.

Consequences

Evidence of activity between 1883 and 1888 is slender:

John Edwin Roberts was regularly named as an agent for Odams manure c/o the Mona Brewery in the North Wales Chronicle for the years December 1883 up to 1888; attending Odams' annual dinner in Bangor during the mid-1880s.

By February 1889 there was no longer any listing. Things were, no doubt, being scaled down; others appeared to have been employed producing beer in the brewery over the period 1881-1891, the assumption is that operations were taking place. The terms of ownership being unclear until the resumption of ownership by David Williams.

The return of David Williams and the appearance of Nicholas Spargo

E. Wynn Hughes states 'the business was taken over by David Williams & Co. in 1888',¹⁶ confirming a loss of control following the legal activity already outlined. Nicholas Spargo was born in Cornwall and since arriving in Anglesey had been a farmer (1871) and a mining



Figure 17. The old rusty pump.



Figure 18. Steps lead up to a storage tank/cistern and old pump, the water is still rich in minerals.



Figure 19. Former barns/grain store now converted into accommodation.



Figure 20. The bruse (brewhouse) at the rear of the house where food and drink was supplied to the labour force, probably it was also where the pig food was prepared.

engineer (1881 and 1891), as well showing an interest in breweries on the island. He married a clergyman's daughter twenty-two years older, in 1867. Following her death in 1889, he married his niece in 1890, who was twenty-one years younger. He died in 1896 aged forty-nine. He was referred to at times as Captain Spargo but there is no information as to the nature of this title.

The Memorandum of Agreement

Further confirmation that David Williams had once again become the owner occurs in his instigation of legal action against Captain Nicholas Spargo in January 1892 for breach of contract to purchase the Mona Brewery.¹⁷

On 31 July 1889, the following memorandum of agreement was entered between them:

I David Williams ... do hereby agree to sell my interest in the Mona Brewery, as sole proprietor of the lease now running sixteen years unexpired at the yearly ground rent of £8 to the said Captain Nicholas Spargo for the sum of £1500 payable as follows: £150 to be paid as a deposit of ten per cent on the sum of £1500 and £300 of fully paid up shares, should he bring the affair out in a public company.

David Williams case was that this was a clear contract for the purchase of the brewery. The defence was that it was never intended to be anything more than an option for Captain Spargo to buy the property, should he form a company for the purpose of taking it over.

Mr Justice Romer held that David William's action had succeeded and ordered the performance of the agreement and ordered Captain Spargo to pay the costs of the action.

Nicholas Spargo and the Garneddwen Brewery

In August 1889, the month following the memorandum of agreement, Nicholas Spargo purchased the Garneddwen Brewery, situated locally in the village of Llanfair PG for the sum of £500.¹⁸

This was an eight-quarter freehold brewery and comprised of: plant as fitted, a dwelling house, brewing

house, tea rooms, vat stores, stabling and an abundant supply of pure water.

In October 1894 a statement of the affairs of Nicholas Spargo was issued showing liabilities of £1,816 12s 1d assets nil.¹⁹

The debtor states the alleged causes of failure as loss of money in trying to float the Mona Brewery as a limited company and also in litigation relating to the brewery. He failed to comply with the requirements of a bankruptcy notice and was declared bankrupt.

At Bangor Bankruptcy Court, the public examination of the financial affairs of Nicholas Spargo was adjourned in December 1894 because of the illness of the debtor.²⁰ There was a further adjournment in May 1895.

Conclusion of activity

Although the sequence of events is unclear, the indications are the brewery was limping along in 1891 under the direction of Edmund Roberts, the brewery manager and Edward Banks, the brewer.

There was the uncertainty of ownership; in 1891 David Williams was shown as a self-employed draper (his former occupation), possibly under the impression he had sold the brewery to Nicholas Spargo. By 1901 he was far removed from his former occupations; he was a boarder with a limestone quarry man and working as a messenger, presumably at one of the quarries in the Penmon area of Anglesey where he was living.

The bankruptcy of Nicholas Spargo in 1894/95 was no doubt the catalyst for the end of the brewery and according to E. Wynn Hughes it is believed no beer was brewed after 1895.²¹ In April, 1900 there was a further auction and by 1901 Jane Owen 37 years, living on her own means, was the sole occupant of the premises. Previously she had been recorded as housekeeper to Edmund Roberts in 1891; she may have been the same person who worked for the Jones family in 1881 as a kitchen maid, aged 17, albeit under a different Christian name.

The final days were a far cry from the heady times of brewing and farming. Although external economic fac-

tors are a strong determinant of well-being, the individual can often succeed in spite of or because of these; as John Jones did for thirty four years, until disintegration took place after his death.

Workers at the Mona Brewery

All living in Llanfachraeth unless shown otherwise or mentioned previously:

Albert Allanson

Albert Allanson (1853-1900) was born in Cornwall (referred to as Allinson by several sources). *Slater's Directory* of 1880 names him as managing director of the brewery. His brother John Bath Allanson was a well-known solicitor working in North Wales, being based in Caernarfon. Albert probably arrived at some point before this date and may have left shortly after, being recorded living out of the area during the 1880s. In

1836	Thomas Williams (35)	maltster ²²	
1841	John Lewis (39)	cooper	
1841	William Williams (50)	unspecified occupation	
1841	Owen Parry (25)	unspecified occupation	
1851	Griffith Owens (32)	ale maker brewe	Llanfigael
1851	John Lewis (49)	cooper	
1851	Thomas Jones (35)	brewery worker	
1851	David Jones (23)	maltster	
1857	Robert Williams	drayman ²³	
1861	Edward Owen (42)	brewer	Llanfaethlu Parish
1861	Thos W. Jones (son 30)	commercial traveller	
1861	John Owen (48)	maltster	
1861	Evan Parry (23)	drayman	
1861	William Hughes (24)	brewer	
1861	Thomas Owen (13)	errand boy	
1871	Richard Jones (46)	brew house drayman	Llanfaethlu Parish
1871	Mgt E. Jones (51, owner)	maltster and brewer	
1871	Wm. O. Jones (25, son)	maltster and brewer	
1871	Steven B. Jones (21, son)	maltster and brewer	
1871	H. Jones (25, nephew)	traveller in ale and spirits	
1871	Robert Witham (40)	drayman	
1871	Henry Hughes (36)	maltster	
1871	Edward Owen (52)	brewer	
1871	John Jones (28)	maltster	
1880	Albert Allanson (27)	managing director	born Cornwall
1881	Margaret E. Jones (61)	brewer	
1881	Stephen B. Jones (31)	gardener	
1881	Wm. O. Jones (35)	son, traveller and manager	
1881	Herbert Jones (35)	operative brewer	
1881	A. Humphreys (30)	maltster	born Shropshire
1881	Edward Banks (46)	cooper	born Tower Hamlets
1891	Edmund Roberts (63)	brewery manager	
1891	Edward Banks (56)	brewer	

1880, he married the daughter of the Priest/Vicar of Exeter Cathedral in what was reported to be a fashionable wedding.²⁴ In 1881, he was living in Exeter with his wife and in-laws, working as a brewer.

A daughter was born in Fulham in 1882 and a further one six years later in Torquay. He was listed as a managing brewer (1891), living in Torquay. His death occurred in 1900 in Newton Abbot, leaving £4,347 in his will. However, there was a further connection with the Mona Brewery in 1884 when he was named as the official liquidator of the brewery along with the involvement of his brother's legal practice.²⁵

Edward Banks

Edward Banks, (1835-1900) was born in Tower Hamlets. At the age of 16 he was employed as a cooper, following the same occupation as his father and was recorded in 1871 living in the same area and following the same employment. Shortly after this he moved to Anglesey and married a local girl, Margaret Parry in 1873. Arrival was perhaps soon after the death of John Jones. In 1881, he is shown as living in Llanfachraeth, working as a cooper; by 1891 as a brewer.

Herbert Jones

Herbert Jones (b.1846) was the son of the afore mentioned Owen and Frances Jones of the Llanfechell Brewery and was related to Andrew Brereton, a brewer of Mold. He was educated at a boarding school in Chester and after working at the Mona Brewery, was in 1891 living in Broughton, near Salford, employed as a chemist's assistant.

William Owen Jones

William Owen Jones (b.1846) son of John and Margaret Jones who by 1891 was living and working as a self-employed builder in West Derby, Liverpool.

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